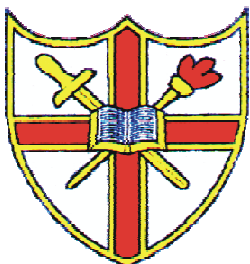


Sounding the Trumpet

Autumn 2014



F.E.M.



This is a homiletical magazine designed to encourage and assist all who are engaged in the preaching of the pure Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

One of the aims of FEM (as it is affectionately known by its members) is to give preachers instruction in preparation, format and delivery of the message of Saving Grace both inside and outside of church buildings. We trust that this magazine will be both a blessing and assistance to all who proclaim the Good News of sins forgiven and the hope of eternal life through saving faith in the Son of God.

Sounding the Trumpet is published four times a year. If you would like to subscribe please contact the address below or go to www.femonline.co.uk for a form.

Articles included in this magazine are chosen for their homiletical content and not for a person's theological persuasion. As the Fellowship of Evangelistic Ministries is a conservative evangelical body, no articles by those of a liberal position will knowingly be included in this journal.

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"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17).

Introduction

We have to understand that Peter's heart was wounded by his recent denial of Christ. **"But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise"** (Mark 14:31). A very grand confession of faith in Christ, but when the time came, Peter crumbled and fled the scene of the Lord's trial with a broken spirit. **"And he went out, and wept bitterly"** (Matthew 26:75). Who would even think of choosing Peter as a shepherd for the Lord's sheep? Jesus, in our text, lovingly encourages him to

look beyond the mistakes of the past to see what God can make of him. We should not read into any of the following statements that Christ was condemning Peter, instead He was seeking to draw Peter to a true, heartfelt confession of faith.

First question

"Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" Jesus here is reminding him what he said a few days previous. **"Although all shall be offended, yet will not I"** (Mark 14:29). The Greek word used by the Lord for "lovest" is *'agape'*, which refers to the kind of love only God can, by His Spirit, put in our hearts. This is the highest kind of love, therefore Jesus was questioning Peter about his level of love. In response, Peter used an altogether different word for love. "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." This word is *'phileo'* in Greek and describes affection shown to others. At first glance it appears that Peter is being a little deceptive in his answer, but in reality he could say nothing more than this. Notice that he aware Jesus knew what was in his heart, so there is no reason to think Peter was trying to be clever with his words. Before the cross, he boasted about his love for Jesus, now after the cross, he no longer desired to make

such high sounding claims. In his heart he was saying, "How can I possibly say that I truly love Jesus?" That humble position is the very foundation that would fit him for being used by God.

Second question

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" it is to be noticed that the Lord here omits "more than these" from His second question to Peter. Peter would not compare himself with the other disciples, that is, he was free from spiritual pride. Though the question seems to be a repetition of the first, it makes sense if we put emphasis on the word "lovest". This is what Jesus was asking: "Peter, do you love me at all?" Once again Jesus used 'agape' but Peter responded with '*phileo*'. Peter was unable to say that there was even a shred of evidence of there being the divine type of love in his heart for the Lord. We should remind ourselves that there is nothing negative about Peter's reply, in fact, it proves that he is no longer trusting in his own strength or resolve.

Third question

"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" This third question employs Peter's '*phileo*', which has Jesus asking, "Peter, do you even have affection for Me?" We cannot but recognise the fact that the three questions are meant to remind Peter of the three times he denied Jesus. **"And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice"** (Mark 14:72). His heart and soul have been probed by Jesus to the very depths. We can almost hear the anguish

of spirit in Peter's answer, "Lord, You know all things, You must know that I have affection for You!" He still cannot bring himself to use the stronger word for love, but it is a start, and something real that the Lord can build upon.

Conclusion

Why did Peter have to go through this ordeal if Jesus knows everything as was declared? The Lord indeed is omniscient, all-knowing, but the man he was commissioning for the glorious task was not, for he did not even know the true state of his heart before Christ. Nevertheless, Peter's feeble commitment to Jesus was enough for Him to use His heartbroken and miserable disciple. Just because he had terribly denied the Lord does not mean that he is passed usefulness. In fact, he would feed lambs; be used to draw thousands to Christ on the Day of Pentecost, and feed sheep; bring those new converts to maturity in Christ. Peter was used by the Lord until the day of his death. **"This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me"** (John 21:19). We are never as strong as we think we are. We claim that we will stand firm when tribulation comes, but the smallest insult brings us to our knees in defeat. But it is not what we think we are or could be, rather it is what the Holy Spirit can make of us that really matters. None of this infers that we should comfort ourselves in our self-imposed weakness, but that we should not allow Satan use our past sin or mistakes to hinder our future walk with Christ.



Fishers of Men

Text: Jeremiah 16:14-21, Mark 1:14-22

So often there are things in the Bible that we take as read, a word, a phrase or even a command given by God or Christ Jesus, becomes so well known to us that we lose sight of what it really means. Today I want to look at just such a well-known phrase or saying.

Mark 1:14-22

This calling of the disciples to be "Fishers" was not a new call, in fact it is recorded some 3 times in the O.T., and those are all in the Major Prophets and they show to us the way that God planned things, even hundreds of years before Christ Jesus was born. Indeed they show that God's plan went back even before Creation came into being. So let's for a brief time look at those 3 promises made by God, that show us how He planned to call men and women from the four corners of the Earth, to be "Fishers of Men."

Isaiah 19:8

This begins with a terrible warning against evil people and evil nations, in short against all who are sinners in the eyes of God. To Egypt, at this time, fishing was its most important industry. In the Tomb of BENI HASAN, 19th Century B.C, there is a wonderful wall painting depicting two Egyptians casting fish-hooks in to a river. One is using a rod and line, the other is kneeling using a small net. In the 6th Century Tomb at SAKKARH, is a similar picture, two groups of men are seen using nets and there is also a single fisherman. The fish they have caught are spread out for

all to see. Fish were a great part of Egypt's wealth and strength.

BUT, says God, the God who commands nature itself, "I will remove the fish, not one shall remain and Egypt's wealth and strength shall be taken away. BUT in His House He shall replace FISH with the ETERNAL SOULS OF MEN. Did you notice how God speaks, He begins with, "they shall mourn" and He ends with "they languish" and then He goes even further, in :9 He says "they shall be ashamed." WHY? Because God promises that He is not only going to take away the "fishers" of worldly "fish", He is going to replace them with "fishers of souls". Not fishers of money, or fishers of worldly aid, or fishers of other men's good works, but "FISHERS OF MEN'S SOULS" That the promise made! What comes next?

Jeremiah 16:16

God is here talking about the House of Israel; however the Spiritual application is to the Children of God who are Born Again by Faith Alone in Christ Jesus Alone. Here in Jeremiah 16:16, God says, "I have a people who are scattered throughout the whole World. From every corner of the Earth, God will seek out His "Lost Sheep" by sending many "Fishers" to catch them and draw them back to the One True God, and bring them back to their land. This Land is Zion's City, God's City, and the New Jerusalem. The result will be the reestablishment of the REPENTANT REMNANT into the Spiritual House of Abraham.

Ezekiel 47: 9-10

This passage is called by many of the O.T. commentators as THE RIVER OF SALVATION. The Temple has been built; it's foundations are sure. The Throne is erected on a FOUNDATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. A far better order of Sacrificial Worship is in place. And now it is time to draw in God's chosen people. Up until this time, this people had lived unto themselves, doing what seemed right in their own eyes. Now is the time for this sad defect must be remedied. If we had read this whole passage we would have seen that from under the Alter there would flow a stream, a stream that the further it flowed the deeper and wider it gets.

Can I break into the vision here; you know it's a very true vision. In modern times it has been discovered that right under the very place where the Alter which Ezekiel told us about, they have discovered a vast reservoir of water. From there it flows down the valley of JEHOSHAPHAT, where it feeds the BROOK KEDRON, and then on through barren, dry lands until it reaches and flows into the DEAD SEA.

SUCH ARE THE WONDERFUL TRUTHS THAT ARE FOUND IN GOD'S WORD, IF ONLY WE LOOKED AT THE WORDS WE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE READING. In this world in which we live, this river does not bring life. It has no healing power upon the Barren Land or the Dead Sea. It has flowed for ages, but it has alleviated the Dead Sea's bitterness one tiny bit.

Yet when God sends out His "Fishers" they shall catch and remove His "Fish" so that the bitterness shall not harm them. WHY? Because they have been taken out of this world and their SOULS will remain in the glorious stream of life

giving sweet water that is SALVATION.

Let's quickly move on, as time does for us this. Yet even in time God's plan never changes one iota. Jesus, God's only Begotten Son, takes up this same theme, you see, there is nothing in the O.T, that does not have a place in God's long term plan of Salvation. Not only that, we also see that Jesus knew every little detail of that plan and He was totally zoned in on it. He worked within its guidelines, He agreed with every little part of it, and He lived and died with only one purpose, to fulfil the working out of God chosen plan for Salvation through Free and Sovereign Grace.

Mark 1:17-18

Jesus says, "Come after Me." In the original it means, "FOLLOW ME, DON'T GO BEFORE BUT FOLLOW WHAT I DO OR SAY."

Don't try and go before me, don't do things your way, however good it may seem, just walk in my footsteps. There is one more important thing here. Up until now these fishermen had only provided for the subsistence of the body, by providing inferior animals for food. NOW as His disciples, or followers, they are to cast there nets to catch the more elusive fish; HUMAN SOULS. But they could not do this unless they did two very important things. They had first is they had be followers of Jesus Christ. Not professional people, not human experts or highly paid with the "right" university or college degree. Their only qualification was to be that they followed everything Jesus said and did. No matter how hard or out of date it might seem. It is God's plan of Salvation, not ours to mess about with.

Secondly, "the bait" on the hook is to be only Jesus Christ, the Sacrifice made upon God's Alter. Not money, not education, not anything our feeble minds might dream up. God plan is to send out FISHER OF MEN TO SAVE SOULS. Yes, sometimes it looks to us to be counter-productive, but you know what it works, it has for over 2,000 years and it is working today. Nowhere in our reading does Jesus says, "John you will be a fisher-man, Peter you will be a builder, James you will be a teacher." No, everyone of them were called to be "Fishermen" That means it's the same for you and me, no-one is exempt, no-one is able to say that does not mean me.

So when did you last go "Fishing?"

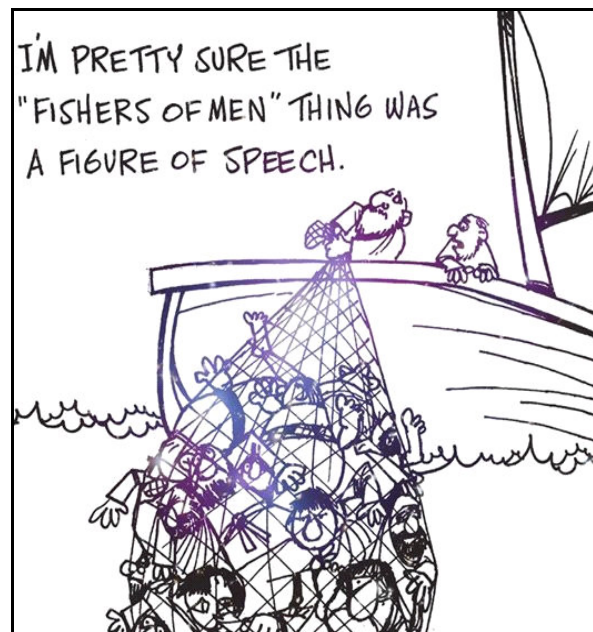
That's a hard question, it dives right into the centre of "self" and we don't like answering such questions that are too personal! I will tell you the problem, God writes it for us right here in His Wonderful, all sufficient Word, if only we really took in what we read and compared Scripture with Scripture.

Turn with me to Song of Solomon chapter 5. The bride longs for her Beloved, but He has removed himself from her, because she was too lazy to get to from her bed. She said to Him "I HAVE PUT OFF MY COAT; HOW SHALL I PUT IT ON? I HAVE WASHED MY FEET; HOW SHALL I DEFILE THEM?"

It is a sad response that He receives from her who He has loved and done so much for. The feet of the people, in those days, were not covered as ours today. They wore sandals, these soon made their feet sandy and dirty. So she says, "I've taken off my coat, put aside my sandals and washed my feet. I'm

having a rest, I can't get up again, it's just too hard, and I'm tired!" That's us today, we have so much to do, that when Jesus wants us to catch SOULS FOR HIM, we are too tired because of so many worldly things.

The first command that Jesus gave to His disciples was to be "Fisher's" RIGHT-HERE-TODAY. Yet today it's lost, forgotten, and we have empty pews and dead souls out there. Souls that are only going one way, they are heading for an eternity in Hell. "CATCH FISH-SAVE SOULS" That should be the banner over this Church and each of its Born Again members, but is it?



The Fellowship of Evangelistic Ministries is a conservative, evangelical body that adheres strictly to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Founded in 1896 in Cross Street Baptist Church, London, where eleven men met for prayer and formed the Evangelical Preachers Association. A new constitution was drawn up in 1980 under the present name. FEM proclaims the historical and Biblical Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and endeavours to be obedient to the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. If you are an evangelist, pastor, missionary or other Christian worker, we would be honoured to welcome you into our membership. Membership to FEM is open to all truly born again believers .



Introduction

I have a great interest in the distribution of the gospel tracts. I am aware there are many believers who have no time or interest in the distribution of gospel tracts. They have their own ideas and reasons for their negative stance. Let me give you my reason for my personal positive stance and position on the use of tracts.

Word of Witness

It is always better to start with the book of Books, the Bible. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14). So Christian believers are commissioned to witness to people about Jesus and His love in a positive and dare I say it - a happy joyful way. "And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33) "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

I have given only three scripture references from over one hundred available however they show that apostles, prophets and believers each in their own manner witnessed to the life, death, resurrection and ascension back to Heaven of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is what they did. They shared what they had seen and they talked about what they had heard. Put simply,

these Christian's believers did what the Lord had asked them to do and what He wanted them to do. Witness. Talk. Share. Preach. Write letters. Reach out to the people. The Gospel is for the people in the streets not only for believers in sanctified buildings. It is for people who speak out rather than remain silent. Christianity is not a secret society it is to be vocal and open to all. Faith is friendly and expressive it is warm hearted with the truth of the Lord Jesus.

Tracts of Truth

Bob Roberts wrote with fine balance concerning the limited use of tracts. "God spoke to Balaam through a donkey. So I reckon God can also use a tract. But I'm not sure that makes it God's favourite medium. The best evangelism happens through relationships, through sharing burdens, dreams, pains, and fears. The Gospel spreads through life, breath, touch, and shared life; it is not so much taught as it is caught. The incarnation is all about God moving into the neighbourhood, and joining the human struggle. Perhaps a tract can be our first glimpse of God, and spark some sort of curiosity. But the good news is that God so loved the world that He did not just give us a tract but gave us his Son. And it is this same God who invites us to give our lives away for the sake of others. Jesus spread the Gospel not through force, but through fascination. And we get to do the same." (edited).

Less is More

A good tract is a short piece of writing expressing the full gospel of Jesus Christ. Tracts come in various shapes and sizes. Usually it will present the law, also a direct reference to Jesus Christ dying on the cross at Calvary. It will clearly open up the readers, their personal need can be met through repentance of sin and the need to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. (John 1:12) "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name".

Topics for Tracts

Any method that results in people hearing, reading and understanding the Biblical Gospel is a good evangelism method. Gospel tracts are small booklets that present the gospel, usually based on a specific theme. The theme may be a holiday, a timely issue, a movie or TV show, a book series, a musician, etc. – there are gospel tracts on virtually every topic imaginable. The goal of a gospel tract is to get the gospel of salvation of Jesus Christ into peoples' hands in an interesting and easy-to-read format. While the precise origin of gospel tracts is uncertain, there

are records of them as early as the 13th century A.D. Gospel tracts were popularised during the Protestant Reformation, and the invention of the printing press made mass-production of tracts much easier and faster.

Inside Information

I believe the tracts used in local communities should contain details of the local evangelical church fellowship. Contact telephone, email address. Website address. General details, not personal details are perhaps the safest way. Be aware of the thousands of lonely hurting people near your local church. One tract used by The Lord can be filled with heavenly possibility.

Where and When

One can find a 'happy tracter' in any place and generally speaking at any normal time. Public places invite posts on the notice boards these simple boards create a point of interest for the passing people. Be willing to pay if asked. Pray over each posting then go and witness to the wind. I always remind myself that one does not use a sledgehammer to plant a seed. Much better to be courteous and discreet. Be brave and selective at all times.

Creator God

By Richard Hardy

Revelation .21:1 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.'

Creator God, Lord of creation
Landscapes of beauty portray.
The sunsets, horizons on fire
The Morning Star shines in the day.

The high, snow capped mountains
wild, raging untamed sea.
The creatures You've created
All this beauty made free.

I give thanks that I've witnessed
All the work of Your hand.
Greater than all artists,
Paint sea, sky and dry land.

But we can only imagine
For all are sinners from birth.
You are still the Creator, making
New Heaven, and a New Earth.